

18 November 2021

City of Westfir Planning Commission
47441 Westoak Road
PO Box 296
Westfir, OR 97492

Re: Case No. SR2021-01 - Letter of Support for Applicant

Honorable Commissioners,

My name is Chuck Arnold from Bend, Oregon. I am writing to share my experience with the Applicant. Currently, I serve as the Urban Renewal Program Manager for the City of Redmond. From 2006 to 2015 I was Executive Director of the nonprofit Downtown Bend Business Association-similar to a Chamber of Commerce. The DBBA works to keep Downtown Bend a vibrant and dynamic destination.

One of the most valued community locations in Downtown Bend is Mirror Pond Plaza. The area is frequently visited by tourists who gather for photos overlooking the Deschutes River and a scenic vista of North Sister just 14 miles away. The Plaza area has received millions of dollars of public investment and is a place of civic pride. The Rademacher House, a historic structure and city founder's house, was beautifully restored and sited adjacent to the Plaza hosting a community art gallery.

By 2011, the building and the Plaza had become a location riddled with problems. Transients harassed visitors and drug use and crime skyrocketed at the site. The gallery closed and Plaza became a place to avoid. I served on a panel with the City of Bend to find a tenant for the Rademacher House that could bring vibrancy back to the Plaza. Reflecting back, I am very proud I advocated for the tenant to be an unknown, enthusiastic businessman named David Marchi who vowed to make the area vibrant again.

In the fall of 2012, Mr. Marchi started Crow's Feet Commons in the Rademacher House at Mirror Pond Plaza. It was refreshing to work with a business owner with so much passion, zeal, and keen understanding of community. Mr. Marchi audaciously took on the responsibility of being a steward. Day in and day out, he was determined to succeed with a smile and make the space welcoming again to everyone. After all, smiling was not only just what you'd receive when you met with Mr. Marchi and staff, but it was also central to the naming of the business-crow's feet-the smile lines you earn around your eyes from doing so much of it.

It was the investment-financial and spiritual-from Mr. Marchi that brought the area back to life. He activated the Plaza with inviting, safe, and wholesome community events. From small concerts to outdoor markets, the Plaza returned to its glory as a hub of the downtown atmosphere. Crow's Feet Commons worked alongside, my organization (the DBBA), the Bend Police Department, and the City of Bend to incorporate "Environmental Policing" strategies to deter criminal behaviors in a benign and unobtrusive way. Fill an area with positive activity, attracting positive people and watch an area become an asset not a liability.

Crow's Feet Commons helped transform Downtown Bend when it needed it most. Mr. Marchi is a true steward of his community and I most certainly believe he would be a welcomed resident and contributor to Westfir. Although I am not familiar with the details of the proposal for Westfir, I urge you to give Mr. Marchi the opportunity to add to your community and support his Planning application.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Chuck Arnold
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(541) 419-7817